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Letter dated 13 July 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Please find attached the assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Slovakia in February 2007 (see annex). This assessment was prepared under my responsibility following consultations with the other members of the Council.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Peter **Burian**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 13 July 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Slovakia (February 2007)

Under the presidency of Ambassador Peter Burian, Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations, the Security Council engaged in an extensive programme of work. During the month of February 2007, the Council held eight closed consultations of the whole, one debate, three open debates and four adoption meetings. It adopted four resolutions and issued two presidential statements. In addition, the members of the Council agreed on the texts of eight statements to the press, which the President subsequently read out.

On 2 February, the President of the Council briefed the press on the agreed provisional programme of work of the Council for February 2007. The Presidency posted regular updates of the provisional programme of work on its website and gave informal briefings after each round of informal consultations to representatives of interested Member States that are currently not members of the Council.

Africa

Chad/Central African Republic/Sudan

On 27 February, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hédi Annabi, presented the report of the Secretary-General on Chad and the Central African Republic (S/2007/97), which had been submitted in accordance with the request contained in a Security Council presidential statement (S/PRST/2007/2). The report contained the findings of the second multidimensional technical assessment mission, which had visited the region from 21 January to 6 February. In his briefing, the Assistant Secretary-General said that eastern Chad was facing a multifaceted security and humanitarian crisis. He informed the Council about options to address the crisis, focusing on the possibility of deployment of a multidimensional United Nations operation.

During the discussion, members of the Council noted with concern that the situation along the borders shared by the Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic continued to be unstable and posed a threat to the safety of the civilian population, particularly for people in camps for refugees and internally displaced persons. They discussed the deployment of an advance mission to Chad and the Central African Republic and expressed readiness to consider modalities for the deployment of a multidimensional presence in eastern Chad and the north-eastern Central African Republic with the consent of the two Governments. The members of the Council underlined that, with regard to the challenging environment, the multidimensional United Nations operation would have to be effective. They also noted that it was necessary to count on full support and cooperation of the Governments in the region.

Côte d'Ivoire

On 9 February, the Security Council held informal consultations on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Pierre Schori, briefed the Council on the recent developments in the country. He stressed that very little progress had been made in implementing resolution 1721 (2006) and stated that direct dialogue between the President of Côte d'Ivoire, Laurent Gbagbo, and the Secretary-General of the Forces nouvelles, Guillaume Soro, facilitated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), could open a window of opportunity.

After the informal consultations, the President delivered a statement to the press, in which the members of the Council commended Mr. Schori for the work accomplished as Head of UNOCI. They took note of the stalemate in the peace process and welcomed the commitment of Ivorian political leaders to engage in a dialogue and encouraged the President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaore, in his capacity as the current Chairman of ECOWAS, to facilitate the rapid conclusion of an agreement.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 7 February, the Security Council held informal consultations on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, briefed the Council on the recent developments in the country. He informed the Council members about the progress made in the establishment of the governing institutions following the elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and also about the violence that had erupted in the province of Bas-Congo after local elections as well as about the fragile security situation in the eastern part of the country. He also informed the Council of the consultations with the Government on the post-transitional mandate of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

After the informal consultations, the President delivered a statement to the press, in which the members of the Council welcomed the formation of a new Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and encouraged it to tackle urgently the many challenges that the country continued to face. They also expressed their concern at the clashes reported in the province of Bas-Congo.

On 15 February, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1742 (2007), by which it extended the mandate and personnel strength of MONUC until 15 April 2007 and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on his consultations with the Congolese authorities, including recommendations on possible adjustments to the mandate and capacities of MONUC, not later than 15 March 2007.

On 20 February, the Council held informal consultations on the sanctions regime in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Council heard a briefing by the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ambassador Jorge Voto-Bernales, Permanent Representative of Peru, on the work of the Committee. The Council also examined the interim report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo submitted pursuant to resolution 1698 (2006)

(S/2007/40). The Council decided to refer the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to paragraph 8 of resolution 1698 (2006) (S/2007/68) for the consideration of the Committee.

Somalia

On 2 February, the Security Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ibrahim Gambari, who informed the Council about the intention of the African Union to deploy a peace support mission to Somalia.

The members of the Council discussed the political, security and humanitarian situation in Somalia. During the discussion, they stressed the need for an all-inclusive political process in Somalia within the framework of the Transitional Federal Charter. They emphasized that it was essential to support immediate deployment of the African Union mission in order to stabilize the situation in the country. They also expressed their readiness to review the mandate set out in resolution 1725 (2006). The President read out a statement to the press after the meeting.

On 21 February, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1744 (2007), by which it authorized States members of the African Union to establish a mission in Somalia for a period of six months. It also requested the Secretary-General to send, as soon as possible, a technical assessment mission to the African Union headquarters and Somalia to report on the political and security situation and the possibility of a United Nations peacekeeping operation. Several delegations made explanatory statements following the vote.

Sudan

During informal consultations on 6 February, the Secretary-General briefed the Security Council on his talks at the African Union summit in Addis Ababa with several leaders of African countries. The conflict in Darfur was the main focus of concerns. The Secretary-General said that it was essential to support peacekeeping in Darfur and to convince the Government of the Sudan to accept the agreements reached in Addis Ababa on 16 November 2006 and in Abuja on the three-phase approach. He informed the Council about an agreement reached between the United Nations and the African Union to conduct a joint mission to the Sudan by two special envoys for Darfur, Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim, to revive the peace process. The Secretary-General also informed the Council about his letter of 24 January 2007 addressed to the President of the Sudan regarding assistance to the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS).

The members of the Council welcomed the engagement of the Secretary-General in African issues, which represent a large part of the Council's agenda. They emphasized the need to obtain a genuine response from the Sudan on the implementation of the Addis Ababa and Abuja agreements.

On 8 February, in informal consultations, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations briefed the Council on the situation in the Sudan. His briefing focused on the progress in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the implementation of the three-phase approach of support of the United Nations for AMIS.

The Under-Secretary-General introduced the latest report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in the Sudan (S/2007/42). The Under-Secretary-General emphasized three areas that required sustained attention, namely, security matters; the issue of Abyei; and the forthcoming elections in the Sudan. He underlined the important supportive role of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan, and also briefed the Council on progress in assisting AMIS, in particular in the implementation of the light and heavy support packages and the planning of the hybrid operation.

The members of the Council expressed concern at the lack of progress in the implementation of the security aspects of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. They stressed the necessity of rebuilding trust between the parties. They also emphasized the need to pay greater attention to the Agreement in the forthcoming period. The members of the Council welcomed the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations in implementing the three-phase approach.

On 28 February, the members of the Council agreed that the President should invite the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Alpha Oumar Konaré, to New York to discuss issues related to the Addis Ababa agreement.

Americas

Haiti

On 15 February, the Security Council considered the situation in Haiti. The members had before them the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) (S/2006/1003). The members of the Council also had before them a draft resolution submitted by Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, France, Panama, Peru and the United States of America, which was adopted unanimously as resolution 1743 (2007). Statements were made in explanation of vote after the vote by the representatives of China and Panama. In that resolution, the Council extended the mandate of MINUSTAH until 15 October 2007, with the intention to renew for further period, and called upon the Mission to support the constitutional and political process under way in Haiti and to promote all-inclusive dialogue and national reconciliation. The Council also called upon MINUSTAH, consistent with its mandate, to expand such support to strengthen the State institutions of Haiti. It requested MINUSTAH to continue increased operations in support of the Haitian national police against armed gangs, as deemed necessary to restore security, especially in Port-au-Prince, and encouraged the Mission and the Government of Haiti to undertake coordinated deterrent actions to bring down the level of violence. It also requested MINUSTAH to continue to implement quick-impact projects and, in that context, to accelerate its reorientation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration resources towards a comprehensive community violence reduction programme.

Asia

Afghanistan

On 5 February, the Security Council held informal consultations with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations

Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, Tom Koenigs. The Special Representative emphasized that the security situation was fragile, mainly in the south and south-east of the country, while noting the overall progress in reconstruction and development. He observed that the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police should be significantly strengthened throughout 2007.

Recognizing the continuing importance of fighting terrorist and narcotic threats, the members of the Council stressed the need for the continued engagement of the international community in Afghanistan, and for improvements in security sector reform and in the implementation of all interlinked priorities of the Afghanistan Compact. The fourth session of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board had been successful, showing that the Board should be the primary forum for coordination between the donor community and the Afghan administration. Improving regional cooperation in order to tackle the challenges facing Afghanistan remained crucial.

Iraq

On 22 February, during informal consultations, the Security Council issued a statement to the press, in which it expressed its concern over the situation in Iraq and condemned all terrorist attacks, including the recent chlorine gas and other bombings in and around Baghdad, which had resulted in the death and injury of many innocent Iraqi civilians and others.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 13 February, the Security Council held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. During the debate, the Council was briefed by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Alvaro de Soto. In his briefing, the Special Coordinator summarized and assessed the monthly developments in the region and the ongoing diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving the Arab-Israeli dispute. He stressed that, through the initiatives under way on the Israeli-Palestinian track, there was an opportunity to foster a dynamic in which positive developments were mutually reinforcing. The Council then heard statements by representatives of all its 15 members, followed by representatives of Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, Kuwait, Germany, Cuba, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Japan, Malaysia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Norway, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Argentina, Morocco, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Senegal.

Lebanon

On 8 February, the members of the Security Council met in informal consultations to hear a briefing by a representative of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on the serious incident between the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces along the Blue Line in the area of Yaroun on 7 February. The members of the Council agreed on a statement to the press, in which they expressed deep concern about the incident, welcomed the forthcoming tripartite meeting requested by the Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), and appealed to all parties to respect the Blue Line in its entirety, to exercise utmost restraint and to refrain from any action that could

further escalate the situation. They also reaffirmed their strong support for UNIFIL and reiterated their call for full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

On 13 February, the Council held informal consultations. The members of the Council agreed on a statement to the press, in which they condemned in the strongest terms the bomb attacks on two public buses perpetrated earlier that day in the north-east area of Beirut and that killed three people and caused injury to several others. The members of the Council reiterated their unequivocal condemnation of any attempt to destabilize Lebanon and recalled their determination to continue to assist the Government of Lebanon in the pursuit of the truth and in holding accountable all those involved in that terrorist attack, as well as in other terrorist attacks and assassinations committed in Lebanon since October 2004. Furthermore, they reaffirmed their previous calls on all parties concerned to cooperate fully and urgently to ensure the full implementation of all relevant resolutions concerning the restoration of the territorial integrity, full sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon, in particular resolutions 1559 (2004), 1595 (2005), 1636 (2005), 1664 (2006), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006).

On 13 February, the Council received a copy of a letter from the Prime Minister of Lebanon addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2007/90), in which the Government of Lebanon requested the assistance of the International Independent Investigation Commission in the investigation of the above-mentioned bomb attack near Beirut. Following informal consultations on 15 February, the members of the Council agreed to send a letter from the President of the Council in which they invited the Commission to extend appropriate technical assistance to the Lebanese authorities (S/2007/91).

Timor-Leste

On 12 February, the Security Council held a debate on the situation in Timor-Leste. The members of the Council considered the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) (S/2007/50). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste and Head of UNMIT, Atul Khare, gave an assessment of the situation in Timor-Leste covering the period from 9 August 2006 to 26 January 2007. The Council also heard a statement by the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, José Ramos-Horta, in which he requested an extension of the mandate of UNMIT in view of the continuing fragile political, security and humanitarian situation in his country and the upcoming national elections. During the meeting, the members of the Council reaffirmed their commitment to provide further assistance to Timor-Leste on its path towards peace and the promotion of development and prosperity. The speakers included representatives of Australia, Brazil, Germany (on behalf of the European Union), Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, Portugal and Singapore.

On 22 February, the Council considered a draft resolution (S/2007/98) prepared in the course of the Council's consultations held on 15, 16 and 20 February. The draft resolution was adopted unanimously as resolution 1745 (2007), by which the Council extended the mandate of the Mission until 26 February 2008, and approved a temporary reinforcement of the Mission's force strength by an additional unit of up to 140 police personnel to supplement the existing law enforcement capacity, particularly during the pre- and post-electoral period. By its resolution 1745 (2007), the Council also requested the Secretary-General to keep it

informed of developments on the ground, in particular of the state of preparations for the upcoming elections and the security situation, and to submit to the Council within 60 days after the presidential and parliamentary elections in Timor-Leste a report that would include recommendations for possible adjustments of the mandate and strength of UNMIT.

Thematic issues

Children and armed conflict

On 13 February, the President of the Security Council received letters from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière, in his capacity as Chairman of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, transmitting the conclusions and recommendations of the Working Group concerning the situation of children affected by armed conflict in Burundi (S/2007/92) and Côte d'Ivoire (S/2007/93) adopted by the Working Group on 9 February. On 20 February, the Council approved the recommendations of the Working Group. Accordingly, letters from the President of the Council were sent to the following addressees:

The President of Côte d'Ivoire

The Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire

The Chairpersons of the International Working Group on Côte d'Ivoire

The Mediator and his representative in Côte d'Ivoire

The Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union

The Secretary-General

The Government of Burundi

Similarly, in follow-up to the approval by the Council of the Working Group's conclusions on parties to the armed conflict in the Sudan (S/2006/971), a letter from the President of the Council was sent to the appropriate authorities of the Sudan, including the President, Vice-Presidents and Ministers of the Government of National Unity.

Maintenance of international peace and security: role of the Security Council in supporting security sector reform

On 20 February, the Security Council held an open debate on the maintenance of international peace and security and the role of the Security Council in supporting security sector reform. The meeting was chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovakia, Ján Kubiš. The opening statement on behalf of the United Nations system was delivered by the Secretary-General. Statements were then made by the President of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa; the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Dalius Čekuolis, Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations; and the Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins, Permanent Representative of Angola to the United Nations. Speakers from among the members of the Council included the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, Cui Tiankai; the Under-Secretary of

State for Foreign Affairs of Italy, Vittorio Craxi; the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, Muhammad Abdullah Al-Rumaihi; and the Special Envoy of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Pierre Chevalier. In addition to the members of the Council, representatives of 15 other Member States took the floor during the open debate, including Germany, on behalf of the European Union, and Cuba, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The debate provided an important and timely opportunity to discuss the role of security sector reform in the stabilization and reconstruction processes, particularly in the post-conflict context, and its interlinkages with issues such as the protection of human rights, the rule of law, good governance and development. The debate also served as a forum for discussing the role of the international community in general and of the United Nations in particular in the promotion of security sector reform.

At the end of the debate, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2007/3), in which it stressed that reforming the security sector in post-conflict environments was critical to the consolidation of peace and stability, the promotion of poverty reduction, the rule of law and good governance, the extension of legitimate State authority, and preventing countries from relapsing into conflict. At the same time, the Council emphasized that it was the sovereign right and the primary responsibility of each country to determine its national approach and priorities in security sector reform, which should be a nationally owned process rooted in the particular needs and conditions of that country. The Council noted that the United Nations system had made significant contributions to the re-establishment of functioning security sectors in post-conflict environments, and that an increasing number of United Nations organs, funds, programmes and agencies were engaged in reform support activities. The Council also acknowledged the need for a comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on United Nations approaches to security sector reform, to foster its implementation in post-conflict environments, and expressed its readiness to consider such a report within the scope of its prerogatives under the Charter of the United Nations.

Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction: implementation of resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1673 (2006)

On 23 February, the Security Council held an open debate on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the implementation of resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1673 (2006). The meeting was chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovakia. The opening statement on behalf of the United Nations was delivered by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Nobuaki Tanaka. Upon the invitation of the Council, the meeting was addressed by the following representatives of specialized international organizations: the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Rogelio Pfirter; the Representative of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency to the United Nations, Gustavo R. Zlauvinen; and the Director of Compliance and Facilitation of the World Customs Organization, Michael T. Schmitz. In addition to the members of the Council, representatives of 17 other Member States took the floor during the debate, including Germany, on behalf of the European Union, Belarus, on behalf of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and New Zealand, on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

The speakers in the debate welcomed the opportunity to explore ways to forge greater cooperation between the Council and specialized international organizations, which would help them to implement their obligations under resolution 1540 (2004). Many of them also stressed their commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation, and particularly to keeping nuclear, chemical and biological weapons out of the hands of terrorist and criminal networks.

At the end of the debate, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2007/4), in which it acknowledged with appreciation the work of organizations with expertise in the non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery in providing assistance in the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), and affirmed its determination to promote increased multilateral cooperation, particularly with international organizations, as an important way to boost worldwide implementation of that resolution.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

On 15 February, the members of the Security Council agreed on a statement to the press on the terrorist attack on a bus in the south-eastern city of Zahedan, in the Islamic Republic of Iran. They condemned the attack, carried out on 14 February, which killed at least 18 people and wounded many more, and reiterated that no cause could justify the use of terrorist violence. They underlined the need to bring the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of the terrorist attack, and of all terrorist attacks, to justice. The members of the Council extended their sincere condolences to the families of the victims and to the Iranian people.

On 20 February, the members of the Council agreed on a statement to the press on the bombing of the Delhi-Lahore "Friendship Express" train in India. They condemned the terrorist bombing, carried out on 19 February, in which 67 people were killed and nearly 20 injured, including a large number of Pakistani and Indian nationals. They also reiterated that no cause could justify the use of terrorist violence and underlined the need to bring the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of that attack, as well as all acts of terrorism, to justice. They reaffirmed the need to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and by all means under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law. The members of the Council welcomed the commitment to the peace process expressed by the leaders of India and Pakistan after the attack, and their determination to proceed on the path of dialogue.